

## Message Text

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71

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R 131754Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8658

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

INFO AMCONSUL ANTWERP

UNCLAS BRUSSELS 5226

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: EGEN, BE, NL

SUBJECT: BELGIAN-DTUCH BILATERAL DISCUSSION-ECONOMIC ISSUES

REF.: BRUSSELS 5179

1. BELGIAN AND DUTCH PRIME AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTERS MET FOR ONE DAY BILATERAL TALKS IN BRUSSELS ON SEPTEMBER 12, 1973. LOW KEY DISCUSSION WAS LIMITED TO STRICTLY BILATERAL ISSUES, ALTHOUGH MATTERS OF WIDER IMPORT (EG EC POLICIES) WERE REVIEWED IN INFORMAL TALKS. ACCORDING TO NETHERLANDS EMBASSY SOURCE, MEETING WAS ESSENTIALLY COURTESY CALL BY NEW DUTCH OFFICIALS, BUT GOB OFFICIAL WHO WAS PRESENT SAYS SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS (WHICH WERE NOT EXPECTED) TOOK PLACE ON SUBJECT OF ANTWERP PORT POLICY.

2. THREE ECONOMIC ISSUES WERE DISCUSSED:

A. ANTWERP PORT EXPANSION: EXPANSION OF PORT OF ANTWERP REQUIRES DREDGING OF NEW CHANNEL IN RIVER SCHELDT AND/OR CONSTRUCTION OF NEW CANAL ACROSS DUTCH FLANDERS. AGREEMENTS REACHED ON SEPTEMBER 12 TO PROCEED WITH CHANNEL DREDGING AND TO HOLD NEGOTIATIONS BY END OF YEAR ON NEW CANAL. DUTCH AGREEMENT GIVEN ON BASIS FORMAL BELGIAN GUARANTEES THAT PLANNING UNCLASSIFIED

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WILL INCLUDE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS.

B. PROPOSED PETROLEUM REFINERY: SITE FOR PROPOSED  
BELGIAN-IRANIAN PETROLEUM REFINERY NEAR LIEGE CONCERNS GON WHICH  
IS WORRIED ABOUT POTENTIAL POLLUTION IN NEARBY SOUTH LIMBURG  
(NETHERLANDS) PROVINCE. DUTCH ASKED BELGIANS TO REAFFIRM  
COMMITMENT TO CONSULT PRIOR COMMENCEMENT ANY CONSTRUCTION.  
BELGIAN RENEWED PROMISE TO DO SO.

C. BENELUX CUSTOMS CONTROL: ALTHOUGH CREATION BENELUX  
CUSTOMS UNION ELIMINATED NEED FOR CUSTOMS CONTROLS BELGIANS  
RETAINED BORDER CUSTOMS CHECKS FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES.  
HOWEVER GOB WITHDREW THESE BORDER CHECKS A FEW MONTHS AGO, AND THIS  
BILATERAL MEETING OFFICIALLY RATIFIED DECISION.

3. BELGIANS ALSO RAISED QUESTION OF CONSTRUCTION OF ABORTION  
CLINIC JUST ACROSS BORDER FROM ANTWERP. NEW CLINIC, OBVIOUSLY  
CREATED TO SERVICE BELGIAN CLIENTELE, HAS BEEN SOURCE OF SOME  
COMMENT IN BELGIAN PRESS AND BELGIANS REPORTEDLY PREPARED MAKE AN  
ISSUE OF IT IF DUTCH BECOME TOO DIFFICULT ABOUT PETROLEUM REFINERY.  
STRAUSZ-HUPE

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